

Smuggling of Antiques and Artifacts*[Translation]*

1598. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have examined the loopholes of the existing laws to prevent the smuggling of the antiques and artifacts in view of the facts emerging from the recent events of auction of Indian antiquities by renowned auctioneers abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of cases reported and worked out in 1996 together with the estimated value of antiques;

(d) whether the Government have also taken up the matter of theft and sale of Indian artifacts with the countries involved in the sale of these goods; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The existing arrangement for the registration of antiques and the mechanism for coordinations between the concerned agencies have been reviewed for stepping up vigilance to prevent smuggling of antiquities.

(c) The matter is still under investigation.

(d) and (e) The Indian High Commission at London have been requested to look into the alleged smuggling of antiquities and their auction by Sothebys in London in early 1997.

Public Interest Petitions

1599. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Public Interest Petitions in Supreme Court and High Courts during the last three years and the number of petitions out of these disposed of, State-wise;

(b) whether the development work has been affected by Public Interest Petitions;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for speedy disposal of these petitions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Concession to the Exporters

1600. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Minister propose to extend some additional concessions to the exporters to boost the export to the Latin American countries;

(b) if so, whether any committees have been constituted to furnish vital information to the exporters aiming at the Latin American markets and to provide additional concessions to them; and

(c) if so, the time by which these committees are likely to submit their reports in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two Committees to recommend (i) additional incentives and (ii) to recommend promotional measures for increasing our exports to the Latin American region have been constituted.

(c) The Committees have submitted their reports.

*[English]***Praga Tools Limited**

1601. SHRI AYYANNA PATRUDU : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Praga Tools Limited, Hyderabad is on the verge of closure;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Praga Tools Ltd. was unable to meet the orders placed by Germany, U.S.A., U.K. etc;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government for the revival of the company?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Company had orders from U.K. & Germany which could not be met in 1996-1997 due to financial problems.

(e) In principle approval has been given to Praga Tools Ltd. to convert it into a Joint Venture company.

Stock Investment Scheme

1602. SHRI MANGAL RAM PREMI : Will the Minister

of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 2265 dated December 6, 1996 regarding "stock invest scheme" and state:

- (a) whether the information has since been received and examined;
- (b) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (c) the action taken thereon; and
- (d) the punishment awarded to the managers of the branches of the private and public sector banks and the management of the private sector banks, bank-wise/branch-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) Public Sector Banks have reported that they do not accept photocopies of stock invest (SI) instead of original stock invests from the promoters. These banks are not aware of any instance where financiers of the stockinvest have supplied the photocopies of the stockinvests bearing the same number to other various promoters.

However, an instance has been brought to the notice of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by the Delhi Stock Exchange (DSE) about the misuse of the stockinvest of the public issue of a company where the Registrar to the Issue accepted six applications alongwith the photocopies of SIs. RBI has already written to Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to take appropriate action against the Registrar.

RBI has initiated a series of steps to curb the irregularities in the operation of SI Scheme, the details of which are given below:

1. Banks are permitted to issue Stock Invests only to individuals and mutual funds.
2. A ceiling per individual per capital Issue for issue of Stock Invest has been laid down as corporates were found availing SIs using individual.
3. Acceptance of share applications unaccompanied by original stockinvest/cheques, furnishing declaration to appropriate authorities and treating such applications as valid applications are not in order.
4. The bankers' lien on the deposit account to the investor in respect of an unused stockinvest instrument should not be lifted before the expiry period of four months.

RBI have reported that penalty of Rs. 5 lakhs each was imposed private sector banks/public sectors under Sections 47A of the Banking regulation Act, 1949 for violations of their instructions on the Stock invest Scheme. Erring branches of some of the private sector banks are prohibited from issuing Stock Invest for a period of 3-6 months.

Action has been taken / is being taken by these banks

as per the conditions governing the services of employees/officers of private/public sector banks.

Vacant Posts of Judges

1603. SHRI I.D. SWAMI :
SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :
SHRI HARIVANSH SAHAI :
SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL :
SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN :
SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT :
SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of additional posts of Supreme Court and High Courts Judges created and filled during the last three years, Court-wise;

(b) the details of posts of Judges lying vacant in the High Courts and the Supreme Court and the date from which these posts are lying vacant, Court-wise; and

(c) the action being taken by the Government to fill up these vacancies at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b) A statement is attached.

(c) The procedure for such appointments involves consultations among several constitutional authorities. Every effect is being made to fill existing vacancies at the earliest.

Sl. No.	High Court	Addl. posts created from 1.7.1994 to 30.6.1997	Fresh appointments made from 1.7.1994 to 30.6.1997	Posts of Judges/Addl Judges lying Vacant on 1.7.1997
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Allahabad	1	20	7
2.	Andhra Pradesh	10	18	1
3.	Bombay	5	27	8
4.	Calcutta	2	19	11
5.	Delhi	1	10	3
6.	Gauhati	1	5	1
7.	Gujarat	2	10	6
8.	Himachal Pradesh	—	3	—
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	—	4	3
10.	Karnataka	7	19	4
11.	Kerala	4	13	2